

Exchange With Reporters January 23, 1993

Oval Office

Q. How do you like your new office, Mr. President?

The President. I like it a lot. It's a wonderful office.

Q. Did you read the note that President Bush left for you?

The President. I did.

Q. What did that say?

The President. I think we should leave it between the two of us, but it was a very generous note and a very encouraging one.

Attorney General Nomination

Q. Mr. President, what are you doing in pursuit of a new nominee for the attorney generalship? How are you going about this?

The President. I did some work on it yesterday afternoon and had several extended conversations with people about potential nominees and gave my staff some instructions to go do some work on three or four folks.

Q. Three or four—men?

The President. Three or four people. [Laughs] I'm not going to say who—

Q. Have you talked to any prospective nominees directly?

Q. How's it gone so far?

The President. So far I've liked it very much.

Q. —surprises so far?

The President. We just got started, you know. I've got a lot—

Q. Will you be keeping Mr. Sessions on?

The President. I don't want to talk about—

President's Schedule

Q. What are you going to do for the rest of the day, Mr. President?

The President. Work.

Q. Not jogging?

The President. No, I'm going to go out for a jog later. And I'm going to do a little work, and I'm trying to get the house acclimated, get organized.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:08 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on the Death of Justice Thurgood Marshall January 24, 1993

I am deeply saddened by the passing of Justice Thurgood Marshall. He was a giant in the quest for human rights and equal opportunity in this century. Every American should be grate-

ful for the contributions he made as an advocate and Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

NOTE: The related proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the Establishment of the National Economic Council and an Exchange With Reporters January 25, 1993

The President. This is the Executive order which establishes the National Economic Council and which brings into the economic policymaking of the Federal Government not just the

traditional Secretaries of Treasury, the OMB, the Council of Economic Advisers but also the Departments of Commerce, Labor, Agriculture, HUD, Transportation, Energy, EPA, as well as

the Trade Office, State, so that we can all work together. I want to thank all of the people around this table for all the work they've done on this and especially Mr. Rubin for the work that he's done to try to reconcile all these things. I believe that this will enable us to make economic policy in a much more specific, clear, and effective way than the Federal Government has in quite a long while.

[At this point, the President signed the Executive order.]

Homosexuals in the Military

Q. If the Joint Chiefs oppose this lifting of the ban on gays in the military, are you still going to go ahead with that?

The President. I'm going to meet with them and discuss it this afternoon. But I intend to keep my commitment. I want their input on how we should do it, however. I think they're entitled to really be listened to on a lot of the practical issues.

Q. Is this part of what you said in your Inaugural Address, that it will require sacrifice?

The President. I think everybody wants to make a contribution to solving these problems, and we're going to give everyone the opportunity to do that.

Q. How quickly will you lift this ban, Mr. President?

The President. I don't have anything else to say about it right now. We're going to have a meeting—

Q. Are you going to have a meeting on it?

The President. I want to talk to the Joint Chiefs about that, and then I'll have a statement to make later.

Q. Today?

The President. I don't know. We've got a lot of other things to do today. Maybe; I don't know.

Taxes

Q. Mr. President, can you say anything about the consumption tax that Senator Bentsen addressed yesterday?

The President. No. I thought he did a very good job on television. I wasn't sure that I was reading about the same interview in the press this morning. He said that no decision had been made, and no decision has been made. We have a lot of options under consideration, but no decision has been made.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on Health Care Reform *January 25, 1993*

I want to say good afternoon to members of the press. We have just finished a very lively discussion about the massive task before us in health care. Vice President Gore and I made a strong commitment to the American people during the last election that we would present to the United States Congress, within 100 days, a plan that would take strong action to control health care costs in America and to begin to provide for the health care needs of all Americans.

As I traveled across the country last year, no stories moved me more than the health care stories. As I think all of you know, many of the people in our Faces of Hope luncheon last week during the Inaugural were people who were struggling to overcome incredible adversity

occasioned by their health care problems. We've met elderly people choosing every week between medicine and food; we've met people forced to leave their jobs to get on public assistance to deal with children with terrific problems; we've met countless people who can't change their jobs because they or someone in their family have had health care problems.

You will all remember, at the economic conference that we sponsored in Little Rock, perhaps the overwhelming concern of the business people there, of all sizes, was doing something about the cost and the availability of health care. When the Vice President and I met with the big three auto makers and the president of the United Auto Workers, once again they said, if you want to do something to help rebuild the